

Professional Development Grant Reflection Report
Submitted by: Brenda Miller

First, I would like to thank the Professional Standards Commission for selecting me as a 2011 grant recipient. Without your support I would have been unable to attend the National Art Educators Association National Conference in Seattle, Washington last month. As a result of attending this national conference I obtained professional knowledge, resources and contacts that will enable me to improve instruction and develop creative, engaging learning opportunities for my students.

In addition to the lesson plans and teaching strategies I was exposed to I also learned about key research in the field of brain science and the correlation of fine arts integration to increased math and science scores. This new information will help me promote arts education at the local and state level by providing me with statistical data supporting the value of arts education for student success. The most important outcome of my attendance at the conference however was the practical applications and strategies that I gained for use in my classroom.

Workshop highlights include: using photography to gain a deeper understanding of the community we live in, demonstrating biology content with visual arts, promoting social justice through song and poetry, deepening mathematical thinking by interpreting and recreating works of art from historical masters, exploring creative writing through play and video production, using common objects to build geometry skills and promote design strategies.

Creativity, imagination and innovation have been identified as critical 21st-century skills that all learners will need to be successful. Each of these learning opportunities I was exposed to will allow me to support all learners in my classroom and enable me to create highly effective lesson plans that incorporate arts integration intended to develop my students' higher order thinking skills.

What I have learned will also help facilitate a dialogue between myself and other stakeholders about the importance of differentiated instruction and teaching strategies that engage students and promote creative thinking. As educators we know that the arts are critically important in developing human potential and preparing our students for success in today's world. Thanks to your grant I will be able to continue the conversation with others with the hope of establishing an environment where the arts are encouraged, cherished, and funded by policy makers, parents, administrators, educators.

I will be sharing my new found knowledge with colleagues at staff meetings and in school professional development, at the Idaho Art Educators Association meeting in October and with parents through my weekly updates. The most important beneficiary will of course be my students, whom I will share with everyday.

Thanks you again for your support of arts education.
Brenda Miller